Comprehensive policy for tribal welfare

*264. SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM:†
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to come out with a comprehensive policy for tribal welfare;

(b) if so, whether the proposed policy is comprising welfare programmes for 698 Scheduled Tribes spread all over the country;

(c) if so, by when this policy is likely to be announced;

(d) to what extent, it would be different than the NDA Government's proposal; and

(e) the amount earmarked for implementation of this policy?

THE MINISTER OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P.R. KYNDIAH) (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) The policy is still in the process of finalization. No time frame can be indicated at this stage.

(e) No amount can be earmarked at this stage. The policy would provide broad framework for issues concerning tribal affairs, and proper utilization of tribal sub plan funds through decentralization and area planning.

SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: Sir, I am really pained when I saw the answer. I have a great respect for the hon. Minister who is a very senior person and a very good parliamentarian also. But, I am sorry to say that my question has not been answered properly. Before I put my first supplementary, I request the hon. Minister to answer my question properly.

SHRI P.R. KYNDIAH: Sir, my answer is very clear. The policy is still in the process of finalisation. So, at this time, no time-frame can be indicated. But, if the hon. Member is referring to (d), "to what extent it would differ from the NDA Government's proposal", I would venture to give an answer.

SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: I am thankful to the hon. Minister. I am satisfied with his kind reply. But I would like to request the hon. Minister, through you, to know as to what the contents of the policy framework of the earlier Government are, on which this Government is planning to improve. I want the hon. Minister to let the House know the contents of the

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the house by Shri Jesudasn Seelam.

policy framework. Secondly, I would like to know how long would this policy take. It is unfortunate that no timeframe has been fixed though it is already ten months. What are the Government officials doing? As a result, the system has come to a standstill.

SHRI P.R. KYNDIAH: Sir, we are making a vigorous effort to come to the conclusion, but since the hon. Member has been kind enough to mention about the need to show where the difference lies, I will only say this. On one basic question, we do differ with the earlier policy which focused on assimilation. We don't believe that the tribal communities everywhere in the country should be put in one cultural basket. We believe, as the first Prime Minister of the country, in 1952, made it clear, that the tribal communities are required to grow according to their genius and talent. Therefore, we accept the fact that we don't agree to the concept of assimilation. We want to see that the tribal population are developed in their own cultural identity and splendour of unity in diversity. That is the key. This is the main difference.

The second difference is that there was no mention of women empowerment on which we feel 'this is a very good aspect today'. The third point on which I would like to take the indulgence of the House in this. We believe that we must follow the Five Principles, ...पंच...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Come to the question, please, it seems there is no comprehensive policy on the tribal uplift. Then you try to frame the policy and then come to the House.

SHRI P.R. KYNDIAH: We are framing the policy now, Sir. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: We, you know that we have been involved in the reforms in the financial sector. But tribal subject and the social sector in the country should be immediately taken up. We feel that there is a dire need for reforms in the social sector. Sir, your age old methods of scholarship and buying books are no more relevant for the tribal youth in the country who have greater aspirations.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let them frame a comprehensive policy. I think, they will cover everything in that. (*Interruptions*) Please take your seat, I think, that is enough. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: Sir, does the Government have intentions of transforming the tribal youth while formulating the policy and bringing about social transformation? Would the Minister kindly answer this? (*Interruptions*) Sir, I need my question to be answered.

SHRI P.R. KYNDIAH: Sir, at this point of time, whatever suggestions the hon. Member has given will be taken care.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Sir, is it not a fact that there are about 67.8 million Scheduled Tribes people—constituting 8.8% of India's population is an important component?

Sir, I would like to know when this Draft Policy was made public to know the reaction and suggestions of the public and experts. What is the reaction of the public and what is the opinion of experts? What are the new reasons for changing the same and formulating the new policy? Can the hon. Minister inform me about the new aspects that are being considered to be included and how will it be different from the earlier one?

SHRI P.R. KYNDIAH: Sir, it will be vastly different. In fact, we have had discussions with a number of NGOs and organisations, and we have come, more or less, to a conclusion that there must be a comprehensive policy pertaining to education, land alienation, tribals in the forests areas and so many other matters that need to be updated and to be in tune with the world today.

SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Sir, in this new trade regime of WTO, how are you going to protect the interests of the tribal artisans? They have been depending on this vocation for a long time, since time immemorial. I would like to know whether your new policy is going to protect them so that they can be prevented from being uprooted from their old vocations.

SHRI P.R. KYNDIAH: Sir, this has come as a matter of suggestion. It is most welcome.

SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Sir, the hon. Minister has made a mention about alienation of tribal land. This is a major problem for the tribal people - whatever may be the policy. As you know, tribal people have lost their land. Most of the State Governments are sending requests to the Central Government for making necessary changes in the provisions, in order to provide land to the tribal people. After the latest verdict of the Supreme Court, the tribal people are receiving so many eviction notices. They are losing their forest rights. What are the steps that the Central Government is going to take to help the tribal people who are facing this problem after the verdict of the Supreme Court?

SHRI P.R. KYNDIAH: Sir, on this I may enlighten the hon. Member and thank him for raising the very important issue of eviction. But the National

Common Minimum Programme has made it very clear which will be included in that policy, that this issue of eviction of tribal communities and other forest-dwelling communities from the forest areas will be discontinued. We are coming with something new, not only in this policy but also in real terms to make it effective.

SHRI LEKHRAJ BACHANI: Sir, I would like to submit to the hon. Minister, through you, Sir, that there are so many schools for girls of Scheduled Caste community in so many States where the literacy rate is low. I remember the recent cases of Gujarat and Rajasthan where these schools are to get 100 per cent grant from the Central Government, but for the last two years they are not being given grant from the Central Government.

SHRI P.R. KYNDIAH: Sir, this is a new question altogether about what happens in the administration. I can only inform the hon. Member as the Minister of Tribal Affairs that we are having some specific schemes where there is a component for women and child education. It is for the State Governments to implement the schemes. There are certain schemes which are implemented directly by us through the NGOs. But I can tell the hon. Member that even this question will be taken care of in detail in the policy that we are evolving.

UN Report on Children

*265. DR. KARAN SINGH:†
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the United Nation report on the "state of world children 2005";

(b) if so, whether there is lack of basic amenities for children in the country and millions of children are denied access to proper shelter, clean drinking water, toilets immunization, nutrition, education and even information;

(c) if so, what are the other aspects that have been mentioned in the report about India; and

(d) the steps Government propose to take to improve condition of children who are deprived of the basic rights?

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the house by Dr. Karan Singh.